

PY D31334

STATE COUNCIL OF CIVIL DEFENSE
MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

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INFORMATION CIRCULAR NO. 24

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE USE OF AUTOMOBILES FOR SHELTERS

1. The following policy statement is set forth in order to clarify current misunderstandings concerning the use of passenger automobiles for shelter purposes in the event of atomic attack.

2. Tests conducted by the United States Atomic Energy Commission have shown that even passenger automobiles with steel tops and safety glass windows offer only limited protection from atomic explosions.

3. In the event of enemy attack, all motorists should take the following action, depending upon location and type of warning received:

- (a) If in a "downtown" area and a public warning (sirens, etc.) is heard, the driver should quickly park the car along one side of the street. All occupants then promptly should get out of the vehicle and proceed to the nearest designated shelter area. If no such area readily can be located close at hand, they should take refuge in the tallest building nearby.
- (b) If a considerable distance from a known or obvious place of shelter such as in an outlying residential area, and a public warning (sirens, etc.) is heard, the driver immediately should stop the vehicle along the side of the street. The occupants should then crouch down in the vehicle as close as possible to the floor, at the same time rolling down the windows to lessen the chances of injury from broken glass. (If left unbroken by the explosion, the windows later can be rolled up to keep out contaminating dust and dirt which sometimes may be blown about.)
- (c) Regardless of location, if the first warning of attack is the brilliant flash of an exploding bomb, the driver immediately should bring the car to a stop and all occupants immediately should crouch down as low as possible, remaining in that position until the debris has stopped falling, or "the explosion is over". Then, if possible, the vehicle should be driven to the side of the roadway and parked, in order not to interfere with essential traffic.

4. In general, passenger automobiles do not provide "safe places of refuge". However, if no obvious shelter area is available, it is better to be in a car than out in the open, provided the rules about crouching and rolling down windows are followed.

Richard Gerspach
Richard Gerspach
Director of Civil Defense

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